

Small Group Leader Guide

Today's Suggested Schedule

Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

See the Getting Ready pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Hunt for the Gift
2. Mary and Joseph Travel
3. Where Do You Sleep?

Large Group (20 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Worship
- Bible Story
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

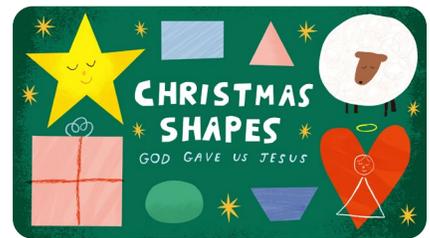
Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. The Gift of Verse
2. What's Missing?
3. Manger Builders  ALLERGY
4. Pass the Gift
5. Best Gift Ornament
6. Journal and Prayer

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Going Home
- Memory Verse Card
- Parent Cue Card (print or email)
- [Parent Cue App](#) and ParentCue.org

THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Jesus is Born Luke 2:1-7

Jesus is the best gift.

Key Question

How do we know God loves us?

Bottom Line

God gave us Jesus.

Memory Verse

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son."

John 3:16 GNT



Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro-tips. Check out the additional Special Needs resources included.

SOCIAL 1/3

Hunt for the Gift

What You Need

- "Hunt for the Gift" Activity Page
- Cardstock
- Gift bows
- Painter's tape



Inclusive Pro Tips

Place presents within each reach for all children.

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "Hunt for the Gift" on cardstock, one set per Small Group.
2. Place the pictures around the room face down and secure with a piece of tape along the top edge.
3. Stick a gift bow on each paper.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to look around the room to find the gift.
2. When they find one, invite everyone over to discover what's inside.
3. Celebrate each discovery! Reset and repeat as desired.

After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Hello friends! I have something exciting to tell you! We're going on a gift hunt today! All around the room are gifts with pretty gift bows on top! **(Show children an example of the presents.)** When you find one, shout hooray and we'll all come see what's inside your gift."

During the Activity

"Ready, set, go! **(Pause.)** Oh look! Our friend **[child's name]** found a gift! Let's go find out what's inside! **(Pause.)** Okay **[child's name]** lift up the gift and show us what's inside. **(Pause.)** It's **[picture]**! Super cool! Let's go find some more gifts! **(Repeat as desired.)** Great job finding all the gifts! Each one of the gifts were super fun, but what do you think is the best gift ever? **(Pause for responses.)** Wow! Those are some amazing gifts!"

After the Activity

"You were such wonderful gift finders today! In our true story from the Bible, we'll hear how God gave us the best gift ever! Let's go hear it together!"

Transition → Move to Worship and Story by walking like you are carrying a giant present!

3-5 Year-Olds

Small Group

December — Week 2

GROUPS 1/6

The Gift of Verse



Memory Verse Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- "The Gift of Verse" Activity Page
- Colored cardstock in a variety of colors
- Glue sticks

Note

You can find examples of hand motions in the "Memory Verse Hand Motions" PDF and video, included in the Prelude folder and on Pinterest.



① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "The Gift of Verse" on colored cardstock in a variety of colors, one set per Small Group.
2. Fold and glue the sides together for each paper.
3. Scatter, out of order in your area.
4. This activity can be done sitting at a table or on the floor.
5. Say the Memory Verse and do the motions together with the children.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to find the five gifts and put them in numerical order.
2. Flip one gift over at a time then the leader will read the words on the back.
3. Once all five gifts have been flipped over, leader will read the entire verse.
4. Say the verse and do the motions together.
5. Reset and repeat as desired.

After the Activity

Connect the Memory Verse to the Bottom Line.

Continue on the next page →

Inclusive Pro Tips



Work as a group and repeat words slowly and several times to allow time for all children to process.

3-5 Year-Olds

Small Group

December — Week 2

GROUPS 1/6

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Inclusive Pro Tips

Work as a group and repeat words slowly and several times to allow time for all children to process.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, come join me over here and let's say our Memory Verse and do the motions together. Everybody ready? Okay! Here we go! 'God (*flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down*) loved the world so much (*cross arms over chest*) that he gave his only Son,' (*rock arms like a baby*) John 3:16. (*Open hands like a book.*) Great job everyone."

During the Activity

"Friends, I need your help finding the five gifts I brought today. Let's go look around! (*Pause.*) Hooray! Hooray! You found all five gifts! Look how pretty and colorful they are! (*Pause.*) Each present has a number on it. (*Point.*) Let's put them in order, one to five. Do you see the gift with the number one on it? (*Pause.*) There it is! What about the gift with the number two? (*Continue with each gift and line up numerically.*) Great job! Thank you for helping me find all the gifts and put them in order. Let's turn them over and see what's inside. (*Flip gift number one over.*) Gift number one says 'God loved the world' hmm, let's see what gift number two has inside. (*Flip gift number two over.*) It says, 'so much.' Let's keep going! (*Continue flipping each gift and reading the words.*) Now that we've opened each of the gifts, let's put the words together. (*Point to each gift as you say the words.*) 'God loved the world that he gave his only Son,' John 3:16. (*Repeat as desired.*) That was so fun opening all the gifts to find our Memory Verse together."

After the Activity

"And do you know what the very best gift God gave us is? (*Pause for responses.*) Jesus! That's right! Jesus is the best gift ever! God loves us so much that [*Bottom Line*] God gave us Jesus. And that is what we celebrate at Christmas! How do we know God loves us? [*Bottom Line*] God gave us Jesus."

3-5 Year-Olds

Small Group

December — Week 2

GROUPS 4/6

Pass the Gift

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- Music player
- Upbeat preschool music
- Gift box with lid
- Individual heart stickers

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- Chairs



① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Put the heart stickers, one per child, inside the gift box.

During the Activity

1. Ask children to sit in a circle.
2. Pass the gift box around as you play the music.
3. Pause the music and ask children to stop passing the gift.
4. Instruct whoever is holding the gift to open the box and take out one sticker then replace the lid.
5. Encourage everyone to say the Memory Verse with the motions together.
6. Start the music and continue until each child has a turn.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

Continue on the next page →

Inclusive Pro Tips



Place chairs in a circle to play.

GROUPS 4/6

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② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, come over and sit in a circle on the floor with me. I have a fun game for us to play."

During the Activity

"We are going to pass this gift box from friend to friend as the music plays. When the music stops, whoever is holding the box gets to do something special. Everyone will get a turn. Are we ready? Great! **(Start music.)** I'll pass the gift next to me, and you pass it next to you. Keep going around the circle. **(Pause the music.)** **[Child's name]** you're holding the gift. Open it up and see what's inside. **(Pause.)** Heart stickers! Hearts make us think of love! Take one sticker then close the box. Let's all say our verse together as we do the motions. Ready? 'God **(flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down)** loved the world so much **(cross arms over chest)** that he gave his only Son,' **(rock arms like a baby)** John 3:16. **(Open hands like a book.)** Great job friends. **(Start music)** Pass the gift. **(Continue until each child has a turn.)** That was so much fun and look you all have hearts to remind you that God loves you!"

After the Activity

"The Bible teaches us wonderful things like how much God loves us! God loves us so much that **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus! Jesus is the best gift ever! How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!"

Inclusive Pro Tips



Place chairs in a circle to play.

GROUPS 6/6

Journal and Prayer

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- Bible
- Journal
- Fun-shaped pen

Note

You can find examples of hand motions in the "Memory Verse Hand Motions" PDF and video, included in the Prelude folder and on Pinterest.



① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Encourage the children to pretend they are carrying a gift as you lead them to your Small Group spot.
2. Sit down and gather the children around you.

During the Activity

1. Review the Bible Story and Memory Verse Hand Motions, then ask the children to help you make a list in the journal of gifts they want to give other people for Christmas.

After the Activity

Pray with children using the list you made in the journal.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"It's Small Group time! Today we are going to pretend we are carrying a gift while we walk to our Small Group spot. Are you going to carry a small gift (***act like you are holding a small gift in one hand***) or a BIG gift? (***Act like you are holding a huge gift with both hands.***) Pick up your gift and get ready to follow me! (***Pretend you are carrying a gift as you lead the children to your Small Group spot.***) Whew! We made it! Now we can sit down and talk about today's Bible Story. One, two, three, sit down with me!"

Continue on the next page →

GROUPS 6/6

Journal and Prayer

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During the Activity

(Open the Bible and lay it in front of the children.) "In our Bible Story today, God gave everyone in the world the best gift ever! **(Pause.)** Do you remember the gift God gave us? Yes! **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus! And Jesus is the best gift!

"Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem. When they got there, baby Jesus was born! Mary wrapped baby Jesus and placed Him in a manger. A manger is where the animals ate their food. Wow! Just think about it! 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son.' John 3:16. That's A LOT of love! And that's how we know God loves us!

"The Bible verse we are learning talks about how we know God loves us. It says, 'God **(flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down)** loved the world so much **(cross arms over chest)** that he gave his only Son,' **(rock arms like a baby)** John 3:16. **(Open hands like a book.)** Did you hear that? God loves us so much **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus! Let's stand up and say that Bible verse together! Just say what I say and do what I do! 'God **(flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down)** loved the world so much **(cross arms over chest)** that he gave his only Son,' **(rock arms like a baby)** John 3:16. **(Open hands like a book.)**

"Yay! **(Clap.)** And that is what we celebrate at Christmas! God loved us so much **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus! Now let's sit down so we can write in our prayer journal and talk to God. **(Open journal.)** In our Bible Story, God gave us the best gift – His Son, JESUS! That is why we give gifts to each other at Christmas. We give to others the way God gave to us. Let's make a list in our journal of gifts we want to give other people for Christmas. Then we can use the list when we pray. When I say your name, tell me one gift you would like to give someone at Christmas, and I will write it in our journal." **(Remember to print, as you write in the journal, so the children can recognize their names and the letters.)**

After the Activity

"These are some wonderful gifts! **(Hold up journal.)** Let's pray and talk to God. Would anyone like to pray before I pray? **(Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.)** Dear God, Thank You for giving us the best gift, JESUS! We know you love us because You gave us Your Son, Jesus. Please help us give to others the way You give to us, so people will know we love them too. **[Child's name]** wants to give a **(what they listed)**. **[Child's name]** wants to give a **(what they listed)**. **[Child's name]** wants... **(continue saying this for each child)** You are the best, God, and we love You very much. In Jesus' name. Amen."